

AD HOC RECREATION COMMITTEE
CITY OF AURORA
January 12, 2016

The Ad Hoc Recreation Committee of the City of Aurora, Ohio, met on Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at Aurora City Hall Council Chambers, for the purpose of holding a regular meeting. Mr. Wolf called the meeting to order at 6:40p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Brad Duguay
Pete Conces
Zena Elliott
Amy McDougald
John Sloe
Scott Wolf - Chairman

Absent: None

Also Present: James Kraus – Parks and Recreation Director

Mr. Duguay moved to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2015 minutes. Mrs. Elliott seconded and the motion was passed, 5–1 and 1 abstain (Brad Duguay) with a voice vote. With changes to the minutes, in the approval of the minutes change Mr. Slow to Mr. Sloe.

CITIZEN’S COMMENTS:

OLD BUSINESS:

Hartman Property: Mr. Kraus stated the revised plans are not completed yet but will include everything that was talked about. It will have the reorganization planning and estimate cost. The prioritizing will need to be done before the project is started due to the funds being available in stages.

Mr. Kraus stated there is \$350,000 in the budget towards the project this year. He is working with the Mayor on other funding through the State of Ohio which is a capital request. Mr. Kraus stated there is \$50,000 that was awarded over 10 years ago from a state representative that was funneled through the Ohio Cultural Facility Commission which is now the Ohio Facility Construction Commission. If we don’t use it this year we will lose it, but because it is through the cultural commission it has to be cultural, historical or educational. The arboretum qualifies for this but the project must be fully funded. Mr. Kraus stated he is working on a document that testifies that in phase one it would be fully funded which means

that part of the \$350,000 allocated this year will have to be used for the arboretum. We need to start the arboretum this year and he is requesting a time allotted to November, 2017 to complete.

Mrs. McDougald asked what the \$350,000 would cover. Mr. Wolf stated the intent was to construct two baseball fields and three athletic fields if we can. Mr. Kraus stated design would be a portion of that including the arboretum. No baseball fields are being phased out at the completion of these fields being built. Only if a recreation center were to be built at the location recommended would they phase out those fields. Mr. Sloe expressed concern about the curve in the road on Rt.82 and Townline. Mr. Wolf stated an independent traffic study would have to be done by the state at a later date if needed.

Recreation Center: Mr. Wolf asked if any of the members of the committee had come up with any alternative ways to pay for a recreation center besides a levy as discussed at the last meeting. The committee was in agreement that the public will have to decide if they want a levy or not. The committee reiterated that a property levy would be preferred instead of income tax levy.

NEW BUSINESS:

Recreation Center Operating Options: Mr. Wolf stated funding operations of the center depends if we partner with the YMCA and they become responsible or whether we do it on our own. Mr. Wolf stated he would like to discuss at this point is our funding the center. He did not want to talk about the YMCA funding due to not having any input or control of the center if they did. They would choose what to set and we have capital reserve for capital improvements. Mrs. McDougald stated but we would also have no liability, Mr. Wolf stated we would still have the liability of the building due to it being a city building.

Mr. Kraus stated if the YMCA operates it, it would be a city owned building that the city would be responsible for major capital improvements such as the roof. They would set the fee, and we would have no control. They are responsible for profit and losses and operations. On an income level for the city, we would have none. The money for the capital improvements would have to come from the city or other revenue source. The YMCA could also back out after a certain amount of years if they wanted to leave and the city would be left to figure out what to do next.

Mr. Wolf stated a recreation center being built is a few years away and things may change in the funding in the future but he wanted to accomplish sending the Mayor two viable options on funding a center.

A: One possibility is partnering with the YMCA, they assume the liability of operating the facility but they also get to set the price of what the residents would have to pay.

B: The city owns and operates the facility and sets the fees to make sure we will not be losing money; we control all aspects of operations.

Mr. Conces stated the only way the city will be financially responsible in running the center to be financially profitable is to treat and run it like the YMCA would. This means we can't limit ourselves to business tax members as well as residents, we have to be broader than that. We have to accept everybody that will pay a proper premium that is not above of what the YMCA would charge. This would make it profitable. Mr. Wolf stated we don't want to operate the center to make a profit, we want to break even. We need to make sure the council and administration understands that. Mr. Kraus states if you want exclusivity the residents will pay for it.

Mr. Kraus stated if we allow the YMCA to operate the building, we are taking no risk and we have no control. If the city runs it, all the risk and control is ours. Mrs. Elliott also stated we get to have quality control which she has seen in some YMCA that is not quite up to par. Mr. Kraus stated the question is do we want to have control and what does that cost to the individual resident. If the YMCA runs it, they will set the membership fee and if it's too high the city can't change it. The other option is for the city to run it and charge enough. Mr. Kraus stated that no matter how many people are going to work there, whether under us or YMCA, all the memberships and revenue generated is going to support all the head count. We may have less head count because we are utilizing some current staff.

Mr. Wolf stated if there was to be a vote taken at this time what would the committee favor to give the mayor knowing down the road the options would be discussed. Three were in favor of the City owned recreation center, two in favor of the YMCA owned and one was undecided.

Mr. Conces stated he felt we can't make this decision it's so much bigger then all of us, so much more has to be explored. The first step is to see if council wants to put it on the ballot, then the funding options have to be explored more thoroughly, perhaps by an exploratory committee before it goes to the voters. Mr. Kraus stated that a needs assessment would have to be done to help the credibility and should be done before going to the voters.

Mr. Sloe stated the mayor will be happy to know that the committee has pursued two options. Mr. Wolf stated we don't know which option will be picked, that will be up to another committee and council that will come after this committee. We have provided two viable options and we can state what we prefer at this time based on the information we have at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Mr. Wolf stated he would like to recommend that the committee ask the mayor to continue to pursue the idea of a recreation center. The committee thinks a needs assessment be done and another committee needs to be put together to evaluate the needs assessment and do a more in-depth analysis of what the committee brought at a later date.

MOTION:

The Ad Hoc Recreation Committee recommended to the mayor that the city pursue in more depth in the future, the concept of a recreation center to be built at a later date with more in-depth analysis on funding and operations after a needs analysis.

Mr. Conces moved: Mrs. McDougald seconded and the motion passed 6 – 0 with a voice vote.

Mr. Kraus stated he would complete a summary report and send it to the committee for comments. Once it is completed it will be presented to the mayor.

Mr. Wolf thanked everyone for the past 9 months of meeting, and the hard work that was completed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Conces moved to adjourn: Mrs. Elliott seconded and the meeting adjourned at 7:40pm

Mr. Scott Wolf – Chairman

Madeleine Marazzi - Recording Secretary